

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15

ICA-11 HA-05 /085 W

-----091907 150627Z /21

R 142115Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7440

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3758

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, NU

SUBJECT: CALL ON ARCHBISHOP

1. AMB AND DCM CALLED ON ARCHBISHOP MSGR. MIGUEL OBANDO Y BRAVO AUGUST 11. THE ARCHBISHOP WENT ON AT GREAT LENGTH ABOUT HIS CONCERN WITH THE TERRORIST SITUATION AND GON REPRESSION IN NICARAGUA AND WITH WHAT HE VIEWED AS AN INCREASE IN POLITICAL CONFRONTATION AND ESCALATING TURMOIL IN THE COUNTRY. THE FEELING AMONG THE MAJORITY OF NICARAGUANS IS THAT SOMOZA MUST GO, HE SAID, AND THE PASTORAL LETTERS (MANAGUA 3599 AND 3644) WERE TO ENCOURAGE SOMOZA TO TAKE SOME ACTION TO REDUCE TURMOIL AND TO CONVINCE THE PUPULACE OF HIS INTENTION TO LEAVE OFFICE.

2. IN RESPONSE TO THE AMB'S QUESTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF THE ARCHBISHOP AS A POSSIBLE POLITICAL MEDIATOR, THE ARCHBISHOP RESPONDED THAT IT WAS UP TO THE POLITICIANS TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS, THAT THE CHURCH WAS ONLY PROVIDING A GENERAL FRAMEWORK FOR A POSSIBLE SOLUTION. HE OPINED THAT THE  
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USG, WITH ITS MASSIVE INFLUENCE IN NICARAGUA, SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN THE MEDIATION. THE AMB EXPLAINED US POLICY TOWARD NICARAGUA AND TOLD THE ARCHBISHOP THAT UNDER CURRENT INSTRUCTIONS WE COULD NOT TAKE AN ACTIVE DIRECT ROLE, OR PROPOSE A SPECIFIC FORMULA FOR THE PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIZATION OF NICARAGUA.

3. THE ARCHBISHOP REFERRED TO THE FRACTIONALIZATION AND FACTIONALIZATION OF THE OPPOSITION AND THE RESULTANT INHIBITIONS TO A PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION. HE SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THESE DEFICIENCIES THE CHURCH HAD HAD TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE, AND THAT IN THE FUTURE HE MIGHT BE PREPARED TO MEDIATE THE CONFLICT.

4. THE AMB TOLD THE ARCHBISHOP OF HIS EFFORTS IN MEETING WITH LEADERS OF VIRTUALLY ALL OPPOSITION FACTIONS, AND ENCOURAGING THEM TO WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO THE PRESIDENT TO BREAK THE STALEMATE. THE ARCHBISHOP SAID THAT HE WAS FOLLOWING A SIMILAR COURSE WITH THEM AND IMPLIED WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY STATING SO THAT HE HAD DISCUSSED THE PASTORAL LETTERS WITH AT LEAST SOME OPPOSITION LEADERS PRIOR TO THEIR ISSUANCE.

5. THE ARCHBISHOP THOUGHT THAT THE PASTORAL LETTERS MIGHT LEAD TO SOME MOVEMENT TOWARD A DIALOGUE, BUT HE DID NOT THINK THAT IT WOULD BE DIRECTLY WITH THE PRESIDENT. HE THOUGHT THAT SUCH A DIALOGUE COULD TAKE PLACE WITH SOMOZA REPRESENTATIVES, HOWEVER. THE AMB AGREED AND SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY A PERSON CLOSE TO SOMOZA THAT INDIRECT DISCUSSIONS WOULD BE POSSIBLE ESPECIALLY IF THEY WERE TO TAKE PLACE WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE NEWS MEDIA WHICH TENDS TO INCREASE RATHER THAN REDUCE POLITICAL POLARIZATION IN NICARAGUA.  
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6. THE AMB AND ARCHBISHOP AGREED TO KEEP IN TOUCH AND TO HAVE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014